

**TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE**

**March 2, 1973**

**MEMORANDUM FOR**

**REAR ADMIRAL DANIEL MURPHY  
MILITARY ASSISTANT TO THE  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

**SUBJECT:           Mine Clearing in North Vietnam**

**Per your request, attached is the operative part of the message  
covering mine clearing.**

NAVY, OSD Reviews Completed

**Brent Scowcroft  
Brig. General, U.S. Air Force**

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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**Retype  
JH/drc 3-2-73**

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1. With respect to increasing mine clearing forces, the US side within the past week has developed the capability for simultaneous clearance operations in Haiphong, Cam Pha and Hon Gai. This has been accomplished by adding two airborne mine counter measures units which include 12 sweeping helicopters, doubling the number of precision navigation transmitters (RAYDIST antennae), and increasing the number of magnetic sweep hydrofoil sea sleds by 4, bringing the total to 12.

In addition, the number of MSOs involved in the area is being brought rapidly to 10. Three MSOs from California will arrive off Haiphong about March 7, and the two Pearl Harbor reserve MSOs will arrive in late March, along with the only remaining MSO in the Pacific which is now undergoing repairs in Guam.

As the DRV side is aware, through special training and conversion efforts the number of helicopters capable of being used for airborne mine clearing has been increased from 13 to 43, and the number of support ships has been raised from two to five. It had been originally estimated that operations in areas other than Haiphong could not commence sooner than two to three weeks after the Haiphong operations. This projected date has now been compressed. It also now appears possible that the mine clearing operation will be completed slightly sooner than the 180 day estimate.

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2. With regard to plans and forces for inland waterways, the US plan was submitted on February 10, 1973. The US side is ready to establish a training school in the Haiphong area. Demonstration sweeps will be conducted of one or two inland waterways near Haiphong. Sufficient US advisers and equipment will be provided to support DRV units involved in this effort.

3. With respect to the request for means for drawing the "magnetic pipes" and mine surveying and removal and for the removal or destruction of MARK-82 delayed action bombs, the US will:

- Provide sufficient pipes and other sweeping equipment as it is developed and procured to supply the DRV units.

- Use helicopters to pull magnetic pipes where accessible to the sea. The use of helicopters for this purpose, however, will be at the expense of coastal and port clearances. Some rivers will be swept from the river mouths to as far up the rivers as obstacle free.

- Provide US trucks and bulldozers to assist in the inland waterway operation. The officer in charge of US mine clearing will give details to the DRV counterparts concerning quantities and delivery times.

- Develop specially designed powered boats on an urgent basis. If these prove satisfactory they will also be provided for use in mineclearing efforts in inland waterways.

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-- Provide adequate detection equipment if it can be developed in time. US laboratories are working urgently on development of a suitable magnetic detection system.

-- Attempt to develop new magnetic sweeping equipment, such as self-propelled magnetic acoustic barrels.

-- Assign ordnance disposal personnel who will give on the spot instruction and advice on destroying or rendering safe dud ordnance wherever inland waterways clearance is done with US advisers. Over 30 explosive ordnance disposal personnel are involved in the mine clearing effort. One officer and 3 enlisted men will be included in the first training group for the school for the DRV in Haiphong. US ordnance disposal advisers will provide instruction on the scene on a case by case basis for disposal of any dud MARK 36 destructors after the area has been swept. Procedures for rendering these destructors safe have already been provided to the DRV side. Should a MARK 82 delayed action bomb be discovered in sweeping inland waterways, it will be disposed of as a dud with the assistance of US advisers on a case by case basis.

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